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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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AGENDA ITEM 140: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (continued)
(A/51/688 and Corr.1 and A/51/813)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume its consideration of the question of gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities, and drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/688 and Corr.1 and to the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, contained in document A/51/813.

2. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities" (A/51/688 and Corr.1), and recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/226 C of 29 July 1994, had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the various aspects related to the secondment to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of military and civilian personnel by Member States, said that the report before the Committee went beyond that precise issue, covering the question of gratis personnel as a whole. Paragraph 3 of the report noted that the number of gratis personnel and the scope of the functions entrusted to them had grown significantly over the past few years, raising policy and management issues requiring attention at both the Secretariat and intergovernmental levels.

3. The report distinguished between two types of gratis personnel, as was explained in paragraph 15. Paragraphs 16 to 23 concerned gratis personnel with an established historical association with the United Nations, described as type I, including associate experts and technical cooperation experts, in respect of whom procedures had existed for some time and were functioning successfully. The report, therefore, did not dwell on type I.

4. Type II, consisting of personnel such as military officers provided to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), for the disarmament of Iraq, to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, to international tribunals and to other Secretariat departments, was described in paragraphs 24 to 40. There were two reasons why the Organization had accepted that category of gratis personnel in recent years: firstly, to satisfy staffing requirements in rapidly developing situations such as the start-up of peacekeeping operations and international tribunals, and secondly, because available resources were not always commensurate with the programmes to be delivered. In the past two or three years, there had been a significant growth in the numbers of gratis personnel and in the scope of their activities. As a result, a need had arisen for an established policy to deal with their status.

5. Paragraphs 41 to 50 of the report dealt with the impact of gratis personnel on the Organization, including their impact on the activities and international character of the Secretariat, and their impact on human resource policies.

6. Paragraphs 51 to 66 dealt with the issue of the financial cost to the Organization of accepting gratis personnel, and paragraphs 67 to 75 contained conclusions and recommendations. Those included suggestions that the General Assembly might wish to reaffirm the principle that Member States collectively should provide the necessary staffing resources to implement United Nations programmes and activities, that it might wish to invite the Secretary-General to take that principle into account in the context of future budgetary submissions of the various programmes and activities, and that it might wish to note that the Secretary-General would accept gratis personnel only on an exceptional basis, to carry out, on a temporary basis, specialized functions in particular cases. Annex I contained suggested guidelines for the acceptance of gratis personnel, covering the following issues: agreements between the United Nations and donor Governments for the acceptance of gratis personnel, selection procedures, functions and status of gratis personnel, length of service, remuneration and related issues, leave entitlements, performance of services and standards of conduct, accountability, third party claims and programme support costs.

7. On the basis of the recommendations contained in the report and those of the Advisory Committee, as well as the discussions in the Committee, he hoped that clear and unequivocal guidelines and directions regarding the issue of gratis personnel would be provided.

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Advisory Committee (A/51/813) contained its observations and recommendations on the report of the Secretary-General regarding the issue of gratis personnel. Paragraphs 1 to 10 of the report of the Advisory Committee provided background information, recalling relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the question of loaned personnel, and pointing out the two main types of gratis personnel, broadly classified by the Secretariat as type I and type II. The Advisory Committee had concluded that few problems had been encountered with respect to type I. As indicated in paragraph 4 of the report, that group had comprised personnel that

was involved in the implementation of extrabudgetary funded activities, including trust funds.

9. The report of the Secretary-General and testimony by his representatives had led the Advisory Committee to conclude that type II gratis personnel had been the source of many of the problems and concerns referred to in the report and in statements by Member States in various intergovernmental bodies. As indicated in paragraph 6, that type of personnel was mainly involved in mandated operations, the cost of which was assessed on Member States. At the time of preparing the report, the number of such personnel had totalled 443; details were found in paragraph 6. The number of type II gratis personnel had expanded considerably in recent years, particularly in conjunction with the growth of peacekeeping operations and the Organization's role in the promotion of international humanitarian law.

10. Particular attention should be paid to paragraphs 10 to 15. In paragraph 10, the Committee disagreed with the basic premise that, unless sufficient resources were granted to the Secretariat, there was no option but to have recourse to gratis personnel. The Committee was of the view that the programme of work agreed to by Member States must be funded in the manner determined by the General Assembly: if the funding was insufficient, the Secretariat must come back to the General Assembly with options on how to proceed. The Secretary-General should not try to solve budget or cash-flow difficulties by soliciting voluntary contributions in order to carry out mandated operations. Such a practice, in the long run, could distort the international character of the Organization and the equality of Member States, and could compromise regulations on fair and transparent recruitment procedures as well as the relevant financial rules governing competitive bidding for goods and services through the United Nations procurement process. It was incumbent on the Secretary-General to draw the attention of the General Assembly to specific difficulties and for Member States in turn, if they accepted that there were indeed difficulties, either to modify the activities or to provide the additional funding.

11. In paragraph 11, the Advisory Committee reiterated recommendations made in the past on the need to prepare budgets on a full-cost basis. In the case of the two international tribunals, for example, full costing would mean that all positions currently occupied by gratis personnel should be budgeted. The tribunals were not extrabudgetary operations.

12. Paragraph 12 of the report elaborated on the implications of preparing budgets on a full-cost basis, and pointed out that "each budget, whether regular, peacekeeping or support account, should show the complete staffing picture for each organizational unit under review", and that positions approved by the General Assembly "must be filled in the traditional manner in full compliance with all existing personnel policies and procedures, including the need to maintain geographical balance". If that procedure was followed, transparency and geographical balance would be enhanced and recourse to gratis personnel would be virtually eliminated except in very rare cases described in paragraphs 13 and 14.

13. Paragraph 13, referring to the situation prior to the preparation and/or approval of a budget, stated that the mechanism contemplated in the resolutions dealing with unforeseen and extraordinary expenses or resolution 49/233 should be invoked by the Secretariat. The Advisory Committee would be involved in authorizing, on behalf of the General Assembly, recourse to gratis personnel, and the related position would be regularized once the relevant budget had been approved.

14. Paragraph 14 dealt with the provision, after the approval of a budget, of expertise for very specialized functions for which expertise was not otherwise available in the Secretariat. The Advisory Committee was not opening a back door to continuing the current practice of soliciting gratis personnel. Personnel obtained under the procedure outlined in paragraph 14 must occupy positions already approved by the General Assembly through the relevant budgetary process.

15. Any "in kind" resources, for example the cost of services of gratis personnel and equipment given on a voluntary basis for budgeted activities, should be treated as income that reduced the assessments on Member States for the benefit of all Member States and not solely for the benefit of the donor. Contributions in cash would be regarded as advances against the assessments on the Member States concerned, rather than voluntary contributions, if the donors demanded that they should be used to offset their assessments.

16. Paragraphs 16 to 18 dealt with other related issues. On the question of charging support costs, the view of the Advisory Committee was clarified in paragraphs 16 and 17. The basic principle was that support costs were charged to meet some of the additional costs which would not otherwise have arisen had the Secretariat not undertaken the activity concerned. For example, a trust fund established by the Secretary-General was charged 13 per cent to offset some of the cost incurred under the regular budget to manage and implement the trust fund activities. However, when a voluntary contribution was made for mandated activities whose cost was assessed on Member States, and if the voluntary contribution was treated in accordance with the procedures already approved by the General Assembly, the donor had in effect reduced assessment on Member States and should not be charged 13 per cent of the contribution. The Advisory Committee had concluded, in paragraph 17, that gratis personnel to be made available in accordance with the procedure outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14 should not incur a support cost charge.

17. The Advisory Committee, while welcoming the guidelines proposed by the Secretary-General, did not consider them adequate, and, in paragraph 18, recommended that they should be redrafted and submitted to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee. In paragraph 20, the Advisory Committee called for annual reporting on the use of gratis personnel, and in paragraph 21, it called for the expeditious phasing out of gratis personnel falling outside the new procedures to be approved by the General Assembly after action on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

18. Ms. DUSCHNER (Canada), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Australia and New Zealand, said that over the years, gratis personnel had become a valuable resource for enabling the Secretary-General to fulfil his mandate. Since the 1960s and 1970s, Member States had been providing gratis personnel in the area of technical cooperation. More recently, with the rapid growth of mandated activities, the Secretary-General had been able to turn to Member States to provide gratis personnel to support activities in peacekeeping, disarmament, humanitarian assistance, international tribunals, economic and social research, internal oversight services, administration and management.

19. While her delegation believed that there continued to be a role for gratis personnel, it was important to ensure that they were used in the ways for which they were intended, to provide expertise on a temporary and exceptional basis for very specialized functions where such expertise was not available in the Secretariat. She agreed with the report of the Advisory Committee that there was a need to review the number of gratis personnel currently in the Organization, their justification, how they were employed, and their accountability.

20. She welcomed the distinction made between the two types of gratis personnel. While type I had a long history with the United Nations, type II was a newer phenomenon. Her delegation was concerned that recruiting type II gratis personnel was seen as a convenient mechanism and an alternative to normal staffing procedures. Any action on that issue should be complemented by methods to strengthen the human resources management policies and practices of the Organization.

21. Her delegation supported the efforts of the Advisory Committee to improve transparency in the process of engaging such personnel, but would caution against institutionalizing the practice, which could have the effect of undermining the integrity of what should be a truly multilateral and universally representative system. Her delegation questioned the restrictive limits the Advisory Committee sought to place on the Secretary-General's authority to employ gratis personnel. In cases of urgency, the Secretary-General should be able to react quickly and seek the use of gratis personnel if no other practical option was available. The Advisory Committee's proposal to require a prior submission with full justification appeared cumbersome and time-consuming. Her delegation believed that all gratis personnel should, in the first instance, be recruited for their expertise in very specialized functions lying outside the usual duties of Secretariat staff, where it was not appropriate or cost-effective to develop those skills within the Secretariat. She agreed that, as a general rule, gratis personnel should not be sought for positions kept vacant solely for financial reasons, nor should they be accepted in excess of the Organization's needs. It was also important to guard against the natural bureaucratic tendency to allow positions temporarily occupied by gratis personnel to become, over time, posts permanently filled by them. The use and, in some cases, misuse of gratis personnel in a variety of ways throughout the Organization had confused the question of how many staff, with what skills, were required to implement agreed mandates.

22. Her delegation welcomed the greater transparency likely to be achieved by full budgetary disclosure, which would help to provide Member States with a more accurate picture of the resource needs of the Organization. However, the Advisory Committee should provide further clarification as to how "full budgeting" would work in practice, given past experience that budgets were not always fully appropriated. For example, her delegation was concerned that where the requirement for a gratis staffing position ceased to exist before the end of the period for which it had been budgeted, there could be a tendency to keep the person on until the end of the period, just because that "resource" had been justified or approved. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 10 of the report concerning shortfalls of funding for mandated activities, her delegation was open to considering all possible solutions when such cases arose.

23. She endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General should report annually on the use of gratis personnel, and particularly on their nationality, duration of service, and functions. The General Assembly would then have the opportunity to ensure that gratis personnel were being employed in the capacities for which they were intended. Also, she could see no obvious reason why gratis personnel should not be included in the Performance Appraisal System, since that would further enhance their accountability.

24. Turning to the issue of limiting the number of gratis personnel in any particular unit, she was concerned that in practice the establishment of an upper limit could lead to institutionalizing gratis personnel, creating expectations that they were a permanent resource for United Nations staffing requirements. The recruitment of gratis personnel should continue to be exceptional and based on the merits of the case, not on artificial or imposed limits.

25. Her delegation strongly supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee not to charge administrative support costs for type II gratis personnel. However, she also saw an urgent need for the Advisory Committee to reconsider the similar charges for type I personnel when it conducted its review of the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999.

26. Her delegation would await the Secretary-General's submission of appropriate guidelines, reflecting the outcome of the General Assembly's deliberations on the issue.

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (continued) (A/51/656 and Add.1, A/51/705 and Add.1)

27. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Inspector, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on comparison of methods of calculating equitable geographical distribution within the United Nations common system (A/51/705), said that the basic question to be answered was the importance of equitable geographical distribution within an international body compared with other criteria applied to employment and conditions of service. The Charter of the United Nations stipulated in Article 101, paragraph 3, that the paramount

consideration in the employment of staff should be securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, with due regard paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Many saw the principle of equitable geographical distribution as competing with the principle of merit and competence, but in his view they were not contradictory but complementary.

28. Equitable geographical distribution was a fundamental principle of the United Nations stemming from its universality, and was a major factor in the uniqueness of the international civil service. Indeed, that principle was considered of such importance that it had been addressed by the General Assembly as far back as its second session in 1947.

29. Free access by nationals of all countries to posts within international agencies in order to guarantee that all Member States of the Organization were duly represented was not difficult, but assuring equitable geographical distribution was more complex. Interviews with various officials with responsibility for recruitment had revealed the difficulty of putting the criterion of equitable geographical distribution into practice. Recruitment planning however, was helpful.

30. The series of recommendations proposed by JIU were intended to be phased in gradually. Each organization should also seek the methods that best met its individual needs. Recommendation 1 reaffirmed the basic principles of membership, level of contribution and population in determining the number of posts that should be allocated to a particular country or region. Recommendation 2 examined the methods already applied by certain organizations, FAO in particular: it had introduced a system of weighting which assigned a certain coefficient to each grade in each category of post. Recommendation 3 was intended to preserve the independence of secretariats when officials occupied specific posts financed from extrabudgetary resources. Recommendation 4 drew the attention of Member States to the dangers of abuse of the practice of assigning gratis personnel to posts which should be subject to geographical distribution. Recommendation 5 took into consideration the situation of smaller organizations in the common system where the application of the principle was more difficult.

31. The report suggested two potentially controversial solutions: the extension of the principle of equitable geographical distribution to the greatest possible number of posts and the introduction of new criteria which took into consideration the location where the budgetary resources would be spent.

32. In closing, he regretted that a number of statistical tables and graphs had been omitted from the final version of the report, as they could have helped to clarify the issue.

33. Mr. HALLIDAY (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management) introduced the comments of the Secretary-General on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on equitable geographical distribution (A/51/705/Add.1). Issues

relating to geographical distribution had been the subject of intense debate in the General Assembly since its earliest days, and Member States had offered guidance on the broad principles underlying the provisions of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter as well as very detailed policy guidelines on methods of calculation and the efforts of the Secretariat to fulfil General Assembly mandates. The Secretary-General reported annually on the composition of the Secretariat, measures taken and the degree of success in achieving equitable geographical distribution. In addition to the programme of national competitive examinations, and despite further reductions in staff, the Office of Human Resources Management would improve its efforts to identify qualified candidates through recruitment missions, Government-assisted initiatives, the media, and computerized networks.

34. The ideas offered in the JIU report on how the principles should be applied and how geographical distribution should be measured should be the subject of general reflection and prepare the groundwork for further discussion on the delicate matter of managing geographical distribution. In view of the importance attached by Member States to such issues, the Secretariat would welcome further guidance from the General Assembly, in particular on the recommendations of the inspectors.

35. With regard to recommendation 1, he shared the view that system-wide coordination of effort must be emphasized, as well as the recommendation that high-level managerial posts should be distributed as equitably as possible among the geographical regions. He recalled the Secretary-General's view expressed in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/C.5/46/2) that the main issue was not the methodology itself, but rather the relative weights given to the various factors within it. In considering the proposals regarding regional and subregional groupings, it should be borne in mind that previous attempts to apply a formula based on those criteria had not proven very successful. Where recommendation 2 was concerned, introducing a post-weighting system would involve far-reaching modifications in the system of quotas and desirable ranges and would be exceedingly complex. The Secretary-General fully supported recommendation 3 on the need to preserve the essential universality and objectivity of United Nations personnel, including those serving in positions financed through extrabudgetary resources.

36. Recommendation 4 referred to gratis personnel, which had been discussed in the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the subject setting out his position on the functions and tasks that would normally be assigned to gratis personnel as well as the specific circumstances under which they might be appointed. Recommendation 5 was of specific interest to smaller organizations of the common system. While he agreed with the concerns expressed by the inspectors, Member States might wish to consider the practical aspects of putting into place a measurement based on the time a post was occupied by a staff member of a given nationality. Such factors as a large staff population holding permanent appointments, limited possibilities for mobility within smaller organizations and practical monitoring considerations appeared to warrant caution.

37. Ms. POWLES (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Australia and Canada, expressed concern about aspects of the JIU report on recruitment, placement and promotion policies (A/51/656). The three delegations were particularly disturbed by its unsubstantiated assertions that discrimination based on gender had been institutionalized in the Secretariat. While in paragraph 96 of the report, the inspectors stated their belief that the special measures giving automatic preference to women in the placement and promotion system were redundant, that view seemed out of step with the wishes of the General Assembly on that issue and with the relevant sections of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

38. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were strong advocates of gender parity in the Secretariat and fully endorsed the goal of 50/50 gender balance by the year 2000. Progress towards those goals had been slow, however. If the principle of equal opportunity and treatment as contained in the Charter was to become a reality for the women of the Secretariat, measures to break down discrimination were important. The steps to achieve gender balance outlined in Administrative Instruction ST/AI/412 were entirely in line with Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter and ensured that women applicants must be at least as well qualified as their male colleagues, not less.

39. The three delegations rejected the JIU contention that discrimination against men had been institutionalized in the Secretariat. Moreover, the figures did not bear out those accusations; rather, they showed that for the past two years men had received more promotions than women. The three delegations respected the independence of JIU and the right of individual inspectors to comment on issues as they saw fit, but believed that they should take due account of the decisions and directives of Member States, and especially of General Assembly resolutions.

40. Mr. FARID (Saudi Arabia) said that, in order to maximize the utilization of human resources at the United Nations, a number of areas must be considered.

41. The Joint Inspection Unit had pointed out in recommendation 2 of its report on recruitment, placement and promotion (A/51/656), that a career development system was lacking, but it also recognized that the goals of the career development system should be redefined more realistically. In the view of his delegation, time-bound objectives were vitally important in redefining such a system. Promotion should also be widely encouraged, since many staff members currently believed that no opportunities existed. His delegation shared the view of JIU that long-term or mission-replacement temporary staff assignments generally led to back-door recruitment or promotions, and an end must be put to that practice. Once the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) was in full operation, vacancies could be anticipated and recruitment planning would negate the need for short-term hiring.

42. On the subject of staff morale, it was imperative for management to establish fair policies and regular dialogue with staff. Moreover, very little had been done to hold those responsible for the management and control of trust funds personally accountable. His delegation considered that a performance

report on human resources management issues which would focus on how individual departments were fulfilling policies and requirements designed to meet General Assembly mandates should be prepared as soon as possible. The Board of Auditors had also identified serious irregularities in the identification, recruitment, reimbursement and management of consultants, an issue which must also be addressed. Clearer and more specific job descriptions in recruitment and promotion would also enhance performance. One area where training was needed in order to improve performance was procurement, field administration and logistics.

43. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the efforts of the Office of Human Resources Management to maximize the performance and accountability of staff members, and supported its efforts to revise the staff manual in order to reflect the changing needs of the Organization.

44. Mr. GODA (Japan) said that, like many delegations, Japan attached great importance to the issue of equitable geographical distribution. However, in its view, the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit lacked supporting arguments. His delegation shared the views expressed in paragraph 5 of the comments by the Secretary-General on the JIU report (A/51/705/Add.1). Therefore, it would have difficulty in supporting the recommendations of JIU for the introduction of many new elements into the formula for calculating geographical distribution. The issue was a sensitive one and further discussion was needed before any such action could be taken.

45. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria) said that the chief merit of the report of JIU would be to stimulate debate on the various ideas it contained. The Committee should give careful consideration to increasing the number of posts subject to the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

46. Mr. STÖCKL (Germany) said that he shared the concerns raised by the representative of New Zealand on the subject of gender balance within the Organization. The principle of equitable geographical representation concerned not only the methods used to calculate such representation but also the increase in the base figure. Posts in the support account for peacekeeping should also be subject to that principle. He regretted the Secretary-General's involvement in the debate on the weighting of the different factors used for calculating equitable geographical representation. It was for Member States and not the Secretary-General to make proposals on that sensitive subject.

47. His delegation did not the support the idea of calculating quotas and desirable ranges on a regional and subregional basis. Calculations should continue to be on a national basis and should reflect the actual contributions of Member States and not their assessment rates.

48. On the question of short-term appointments, it would be helpful if the Secretariat could make available to Member States during the current resumed session statistical data on short-term employment in the Secretariat, broken down by nationality, length of contract, gender balance and gaps between contracts. The Secretary-General should also report to the General Assembly on

recruitment of staff which had taken place after 1 November 1996, as he had been requested to do.

49. Ms. RODRÍGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) said that, while difficult to achieve, the Secretariat's goal of a 50/50 gender balance by the year 2000 was a noble one. The views of JIU were quite important and sought to alert delegations to some of the implications of the pursuit of that goal. In seeking to attain numerical goals, the Secretariat should not lose sight of the need to recruit only qualified personnel who could effectively advance the Organization's programme of work. Female applicants should therefore be given preference over males only if they were equally or better qualified. The principle of equitable geographical representation should also be considered when implementing the goal of a 50/50 gender balance. She would be grateful if the Secretariat could prepare a table showing the percentage of women on the staff of the Secretariat, broken down by nationality, and the percentage of those in high-level posts.

50. Mr. MIRMOHAMMAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the report of JIU would kindle debate not only on the methods of calculating equitable geographic distribution within the United Nations common system but also on the number of posts to be included in the base figure. The Secretariat should inform the Committee of the number, percentage and category of posts that were subject to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

51. Ms. ARCHINI (Italy) said that her delegation was deeply concerned over the issue of gender equality in the Secretariat. While it did not share all the views expressed in the report of JIU, it believed that the report itself could be a useful basis for more in-depth discussion by the General Assembly. The Assembly's decisions, however, must take account of the principle of universality of the Organization. She would welcome clarification by the representative of JIU of recommendation 4, which urged the secretariats of international organizations to exercise caution in accepting nationals from any country provided free-of-charge.

52. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that the United States was firmly opposed to any expansion of the base figure for calculating ranges for purposes of equitable geographical distribution. That figure had been decided upon by the General Assembly and could not be changed by the Secretariat without the specific authority of the Assembly. Her delegation, moreover, would oppose any proposals by the Secretariat to expand the range, particularly with regard to posts funded through the support account for peacekeeping.

53. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Inspector, Joint Inspection Unit), responding to statements by members, said that the criticisms of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/656) by the representative of New Zealand were based on assumptions and not facts. JIU was not opposed to the recruitment of women, but only wished to draw the attention of Member States to certain of the criteria being employed for the recruitment and promotion of women which were in violation of the relevant regulations. For example, the Secretariat had issued instructions that only women should be recruited in order to fulfil certain requirements and quotas. Such action was discriminatory. Responding to the

statement made by the representative of Japan, he said that Member States should determine which system of geographical representation was best suited to each organization.

54. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that it was her delegation's understanding that the Secretariat was currently drafting a code of conduct for all United Nations officials. She would welcome information on the status of that draft, whether the future code would be binding on all United Nations staff and when it was likely to be implemented.

55. Mr. HALLIDAY (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management) said that, led by the Office of Legal Affairs, the Secretariat was indeed working to develop a code of conduct. The Secretariat had provided the staff unions at the various United Nations duty stations with copies of the draft code, and expected to receive their comments by the end of March. The draft would then be discussed in the Staff-Management Coordination Committee at the end of April. The Secretary-General was expected to make reference to the code of conduct when he addressed the Committee. His recommendations would then be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session for action.

56. Mr. MIRMOHAMMAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) recalled his earlier request for information on the number, percentage and category of posts that were subject to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

57. Mr. HALLIDAY (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management) said that 2,700 posts or 20 per cent of the total were subject to the principle of equitable geographical representation. Additional information on the matter was contained in the report of JIU.

AGENDA ITEM 135: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA (continued) (A/51/756 and Add.1 and A/51/423/Add.1)

58. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (A/51/756 and Add.1), said that Security Council resolution 1083 (1996) of 27 November 1996 had extended the Mission's mandate until 31 March 1997. The resources provided by the General Assembly for the period from 1 July 1995 to 31 March 1996 had amounted to $30,470,500 gross. However, by its decisions 50/482 A of 7 June 1996 and 50/482 B of 17 September 1996, the Assembly had decided to extend the utilization of those resources to 30 September and 31 October 1996, respectively. The related expenditure had amounted to $17,004,100 gross, resulting in an unencumbered balance of $13,466,400 gross, which was the result of the postponement of the scheduled implementation of the disarmament and demobilization programme and the non-deployment of additional military personnel together with the repatriation of non-essential military and civilian personnel and the cancellation of air operations in April 1996, following the outbreak of fighting in Monrovia on 6 April 1996.

59. The cost of maintaining the Mission for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 had been originally estimated at $27,615,100 gross. As a result of

the deterioration of the peace process and the outbreak of hostilities in Monrovia in April 1996, however, a revised budget amounting to $14,512,800 gross had been prepared to reflect the reduced activities and staffing level of the Mission. Following the beginning of the disarmament process, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had on 20 December 1996 authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $10 million gross for the period from 1 December 1996 to 31 January 1997 in order to meet the Mission's immediate and essential start-up requirements for the implementation of the disarmament and demobilization process. At the operational level, it was proposed to increase the Mission's strength from 34 to a maximum of 92 military observers. Replacement of the equipment looted during the outbreak of hostilities in Monrovia during April 1996 was also required in order to enable the Mission to carry out its mandate effectively.

60. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were the appropriation of the amount of $12,169,600 gross which had already been authorized and assessed for the period ending 31 March 1996; the assessment on Member States of the amount of $5,840,000 gross which had already been appropriated under the terms of General Assembly resolution 51/3 for the period from 1 July to 30 November 1996; and a decision to credit the remaining unencumbered balance of $7,626,400 gross for the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996 to Member States against their assessment for the period beyond 30 November 1996.

61. The General Assembly was further asked to appropriate an additional amount of $22,925,700 gross for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997; to assess an additional amount of $16,064,700 gross for the operation of the Mission for the current mandate period from 1 December 1996 to 31 March 1997; and to assess for the period from 1 April to 30 June 1997 the amount of $2,287,000 gross per month, in addition to the amount of $1,168,000 gross already authorized under Assembly resolution 51/3, subject to the extension of the Mission's mandate by the Security Council.

62. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (A/51/423/Add.1), said that paragraphs 7 to 9 contained the performance report for the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996. Paragraphs 10 to 21 dealt with the updated cost estimates for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997. The updated cost of maintaining the Observer Mission for that period amounted to $36,941,700 gross, an increase of $22,925,700 gross over the amount of $14,016,000 gross which had been approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/3.

63. Subject to the comments contained in its report, the Advisory Committee recommended the appropriation of an additional amount of $17,899,000 gross for the operations of the Observer Mission for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997; the assessment of an additional amount of $13,192,345 gross for the operation of the Mission for the current mandate period from 1 December 1996 to 31 March 1997, in addition to the amount of $4,672,000 gross already authorized for the same period under Assembly resolution 51/3 of

17 October 1996; and the assessment for the period from 1 April to 30 June 1997 of the amount of $1,568,885 gross per month, in addition to the amount of $1,168,000 gross already authorized under Assembly resolution 51/3, subject to the extension of the Mission's mandate by the Security Council.

64. Ms. OSODE (Liberia) expressed concern about the status of preparations for elections in Liberia. Despite the holding of a ministerial meeting of neighbouring countries on the situation in Liberia and the acknowledgement by the Secretary-General that there had been renewed momentum towards peace in that country, rumours abounded that the elections scheduled for May would be postponed. She wondered if it still made sense, in those circumstances, for the Organization to continue its preparations for the scheduled elections. She would welcome an explanation from the Secretariat on how it intended to proceed.

65. Mr. HALBWACHS (Controller) said that the elections were due to be held in May. A technical mission had returned from the field and had submitted a report, which would be used by the Secretary-General to prepare proposals for further action by the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.